

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A method for exchanging information between entities on a network comprising:

installing an annotation management system on the network;

identifying a plurality of annotatable heterogeneous data objects, each manipulated by a corresponding one of a plurality of applications on the network, wherein each of the plurality of applications specifies an indexing mechanism for indexing data objects associated with a respective application, and wherein the indexing mechanism for each of the plurality of applications is different from one another; and

providing a set of one or more configuration tools configured to:

allow allowing a user to define an annotation structure containing one or more annotation fields and for annotations created for a respective application, and wherein one or more of the annotation fields are used to store metadata included in a given annotation and wherein one or more of the annotation fields store metadata used to index an annotation according to the indexing mechanism associated with the respective application;

associate the annotation structure with at least one of the annotatable data objects, wherein the configuration tools further plurality of applications;

allow a user to define roles configured to determine the type of information captured or viewed in an annotation created for a given data object of a given application; and

associate annotation structures defined by the user with combinations of roles and annotatable data objects.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools provide one or more graphical user interface screens for associating one or more roles with a user.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools provide one or more graphical user interface screens for associating one or more users with a role.

11. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allow a user to specify one or more filters specifying how annotation fields contained in an annotation structure can be manipulated based on user roles.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools:

- allow a user to specify one or more annotation field groups; and
- allow annotation field groups to be added to annotation structures.

13. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allow a user to associate one or more transforms with an annotation structure, the transforms for use in converting the annotation structure into a graphical user interface.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allow a user to associate an annotation structure with annotatable data objects associated with more than one heterogeneous data source.

15. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration tools allows annotatable sub-objects of data objects to be associated with annotation structures.

16-26. (Canceled)